



MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness



UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

January 2024, Volume 9, Issue 1



REFLECTION:

A new year begins. Our lives are filled with turning points, cycles of change, crisis, and transformation. The old passes into ever new beginnings. We grow, we stand still, we grow

again. May we invite this new season's fresh light to flood us with hope and lead us into new and challenging ways of living and shaping our wellness ministries.

TIMELY HEALTH TIPS:

“Brr! The weather outside is chilly.” This is the time of the year to review [winter weather tips for staying safe and healthy](#). Check these [key points about Winter storms](#) to review what to do when temperature-related health and safety risks occur.

Seasonal Affective Disorder.

When winter days are shorter, people may experience “winter blues” because of the reduced periods of sunshine. When these emotional changes significantly affect how a person feels and behaves, they may be experiencing seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or winter depression. In most cases, SAD symptoms start in the late fall or early winter and go away during the spring and summer. [The National Institute of Health](#) site reviews SAD signs and symptoms, causes, and treatments. The same content is available as a [downloadable pdf file](#) for bulletin or newsletter display.

The Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC) offers a [Happy and Healthy Winter toolkit](#) in English and Spanish that can be used as a two page bulletin board display of mental and physical health tips.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS:

A new year begins. New perspectives and emerging thresholds await. What are the needs we identify in our own communities of faith? What health priorities need to be recognized and addressed? How may we promote health, peace, hope, and love? This may be the year your church begins a Wellness Ministry program, or it may be the time to re-examine your program for new directions and focus.

Schedule a planning session this month to begin your forward direction. Each month offers an opportunity to address a specific aspect of health and wellness. What topics and programs can be of benefit to your congregation and community? Get input from faith leaders and congregational members. Mapping out a monthly planning calendar is a good starting point. Locate resources and connect with discussion leaders for the topics identified. Use the [UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit](#) as a guide in your planning.

A new year has begun. May our Health and Wellness ministries focus on promoting health, peace, hope, and love. Step over the threshold with confidence and resolve.

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS:

Follow these links to find information you can use for educational sessions, worship bulletin inserts, bulletin board displays, and newsletter articles.



Some links for January:

- **National Glaucoma Awareness Month:** Nearly three million people ages forty and older have glaucoma and those numbers are projected to increase steadily as more baby boomers move into retirement. In the early stages, glaucoma has no symptoms, no noticeable vision loss or pain, which is why it is called the “sneak thief of sight.” [Prevent Blindness](#) offers a dedicated web page providing patients and their caregivers with additional free information.
- **Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Low Vision Awareness Month:** AMD: there are videos and publications available at this site: <https://nei.nih.gov/health/maculardegen>.
- **Cervical Health Awareness Month.** More than 14,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer each year. The National Cervical Cancer Coalition offers three downloadable [Cervical Cancer Awareness Month Posters](#).
- **National Radon Action Month:** Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in America and claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans each year. You can't see, smell or taste radon, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home. Testing radon levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure.



For Those Who Like to Plan Ahead, Here Are Some links for February:

American Heart Month:

- Kathleen Sebelius, former Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said *“February is not just a time when many people fondly think of those close to their heart. It is also a time to take care of your heart.”*
- The American Heart Association offers many online resources available related to: cardiovascular disease: [heart attack](#), [hypercholesterolemia](#), [hypertension](#), [stroke](#), [peripheral artery disease](#).
- **7 Simple Tips to Get An Accurate Blood Pressure Reading at Home.** This [Home Blood Pressure poster](#) can be downloaded, printed and shared with those you are teaching to do self-assessment of blood pressure.

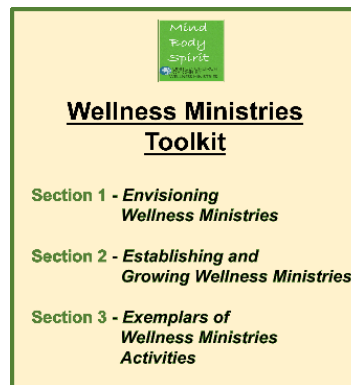


UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM:



Change in Leadership Team: Alyson Breisch has served as Chair and now Co-Chair of the UCC Wellness Ministries Team since 2014. In December 2023, she completed her term of office. Peggy Matteson, who has served as Co-Chair since 2021, now assumes the position as Chair of the team. Alyson will continue to serve as a member of the team and as co-editor of the group’s newsletter, *Mind, Body, Spirit: Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness*.

UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit: This living document on the [UCC.org](https://ucc.org) website is an informative resource that provides concise information and hyperlinks to more in-depth information as desired. The landing page provides access to Section 1 and information about the other sections. Sections 2 and 3 become available after a person registers their contact information and receives a password. Contact information is necessary so users can be notified as updates occur. [This link](#) includes references to the toolkit and the UCC. Anyone who has difficulty accessing the Toolkit, please contact [Peggy Matteson](mailto:PeggyMatteson@ucc.org) directly or send an inquiry to wellnessministries@ucc.org



WEB/BASED RESOURCES/PROGRAMS:

- **Westberg Symposium:** The [2024 Symposium and Conference](#) will be virtual April 15-17, 2024.
- **The Health Ministries Association** will offer *The Cup of Our Life* as a book discussion for 2024. Virtual meetings will be held every Tuesday for eight consecutive weeks from February 6th -March 26th at 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. ET. There is no cost for sessions & written materials. [Registration and book purchase](#) information.

KEEP CONNECTED:



Visit our Facebook and LinkedIn pages: Post comments or share information about your health ministries; join in conversations.

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/UCCFCN/posts/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6951713/>

An invitation from the Editors:

Do you have something you want to share with colleagues? Do you have an innovative way you have provided wellness ministries? Have a question about health and wellness ministries? Let us hear from you. **Contact us at wellnessministries@ucc.org**

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